

Indian Creek (1226E) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Indian Creek (1226E) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Indian Creek is an unclassified intermittent water body in Erath County, TX, approximately 8 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2014 Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels. It was initially listed in 2002.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for Indian Creek should be revised to secondary contact recreation 1 (SCR 1). SCR applies to water bodies where water recreation can occur, but the nature of the recreation does not involve a significant risk of ingestion. SCR 1 applies to intermittent and perennial freshwaters where site-specific information demonstrates that primary contact recreation has little to no likelihood of occurring due to physical characteristics of the water body such as shallow depths or lack of pools.

During the field surveys, field staff did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. Interviews were conducted with water resource professionals familiar with the watershed. Of the individuals interviewed, no one had observed or heard of PCR occurring on the stream although there was one report of fishing in a SCS reservoir on Indian Creek. Most stated that there was not enough water or access for recreation to occur. During the public comment period after the final RUAA report was released, one stakeholder wrote in that they had used Indian Creek for personal PCR for 15-20 years starting in the 1980s. Another stakeholder stated that they used the creek until 2000, although this activity most often occurred on a reservoir (1226N) that is its own water body and contains its own set of water quality standards. Indian Creek was in a state of moderate drought at the time of the study. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.03 meters (1.18 in), no pools greater than one meter deep, and no flow was reported during the study period. Public access is described as moderate with the stream flowing under four road crossings and parallel to a roadside picnic area.

Naturally low water levels decrease the likelihood of PCR use. Indian Creek has a shallow average depth and no evidence of PCR, supporting reclassification to SCR1. In accordance with §307.4 (j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR to SCR1 with the corresponding geometric mean of 630 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Indian Creek, from the confluence with the North Bosque River in Erath County to the headwaters 3.5 miles east of Stephenville in Erath County. This reclassification is appropriate due to “natural, ephemeral, intermittent low flow conditions or water levels” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Indian Creek in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.